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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 001151

SIPDIS

DEPARMENT FOR PRM - MIKE MCKINLEY AND AF/RSA - MIKE BITTRICK; DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS USAID FOR ROGER WINTER AND KATE ALMQUIST; NAIROBI FOR LISA PETERSON; USUN FOR GREG D'ELIA; OSLO FOR ERIKCA BARKES-RUGGLES; LONDON FOR CHARLES GUERNAY; GENEVA FOR NANCE KYLOH

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SUBJECT: COORDINATION FOR THE CHAD CONFERENCE ON DARFUR: EC OBJECTIVES AND SUPPORT

REF: STATE 58545

Classified By: PRMOFF MARC MEZNAR. REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D).

¶11. (C) Summary. The European Commission (EC) is in agreement with USG thoughts on Darfur mediation (reftel), and is prepared to financially support the talks in Chad with 400,000 euros channeled through the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD). According to the EC, important outstanding issues include the composition of the rebels' delegation and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that a humanitarian ceasefire is respected. The EU currently plans to be represented at the Chad meeting by its heads of delegation in Khartoum and N'djamena. End Summary.

¶12. (C) On 3/18, PRMOFF delivered reftel talking points to Roger Moore, DG DEV Head of Unit for the Horn and East Africa, and to Christian Manahl, DG DEV desk officer for Sudan. Manahl said the EC supports the role of the CHD as facilitator for the Darfur mediation effort. He said that he had met with two representatives of the CHD who had just traveled to Brussels from Chad on 3/17. The CHD reported that all sides had agreed to a meeting and that the CHD would facilitate logistics for the rebels to attend. Although the Government of Chad had asked CHD to serve as chair, they declined the invitation but will act as advisor and support to the chair.

¶13. (C) The EC agrees to N'djamena as a venue, although it had hoped for a more neutral location. Regarding the proposed date, Manahl said he felt that the March 23-24 timeframe was too early and that the meeting probably should not take place until at least the 27th. He said that it was important for the right rebels to be identified and for them to be allowed adequate time to prepare for in depth talks, rather than just rounding up anyone to represent the rebel side. He indicated that the rebels who had been in contact with CHD requested more time themselves to prepare for the meeting in Chad. Manahl said the EC also favored a five to six day meeting with a break in the middle so that the negotiating parties could consult back with Khartoum and the military leaders in the field. Furthermore, he suggested a follow-up meeting to take place a month after the mediation effort in order to assess progress (or lack thereof).

¶14. (C) Manahl said that the EC is prepared to use its Rapid Reaction Mechanism (a funding line controlled by DG RELEX which can be disbursed quickly) for a contribution of up to 400,000 euros to support a series of meetings they think will be needed to bring about a lasting humanitarian ceasefire and sustained humanitarian access. (Note. CHD will revise its earlier proposal for a February mediation meeting in Switzerland, an event which never occurred. End Note.)

¶15. (C) Regarding participation, Manahl said that EU heads of mission and U.S. representatives in Khartoum had discussed delegations of five to six each for the two directly opposing groups, and two observers each from the U.S. and EU. At this point, plans are for the EU to be represented by the French head of delegation in N'djamena (who manages EU interests in Chad) and perhaps by his Dutch counterpart in Khartoum (who manages EU interests in Sudan). No decision regarding EU participation has been finalized; a Brussels-based official might attend in place of the Dutch representative.

¶16. (C) In terms of substance, the EU agrees with the principal focus of the talks centering on a humanitarian ceasefire and the issue of humanitarian access. Manahl stated that the military discussions needed to be solid and substantive in order to result in long-term objectives. He agreed that both sides need to come prepared to provide a rough breakout of the forces, the number of armed combatants and where they are located, and to where they would be withdrawn. He added that the Janjaweed issue needed to be addressed. Manahl expressed caution about "self policing" of the ceasefire, noting such might prove ineffective. He preferred using the Verification Monitoring Team (VMT) that is already in-country to ensure that the ceasefire stabilizes. Manahl reported that the GoS prefers the use of

the Civilian Protection Monitoring Team for this purpose, but felt that this group did not have the technical capabilities.

(He noted that perhaps the VMT could be used after the ceasefire was firmly in place.) Manahl stated that funding and/or resources would be required from the international community if either of these monitoring teams were employed to support the ceasefire.

¶ 17. (C) In response to the talking point on "the mandate to negotiate," Manahl expressed concern that no formal request has yet been made to anyone to organize or hold the Chad meeting nor have formal invitations been extended to anyone. He said that yesterday the GoS had requested the GoC to mediate, but there was disagreement between the two governments as to whom would be invited. Manahl said he understood the GoS favored inviting only the SLM, while the GoC felt the JEM should also attend. Another contentious factor relating to attendance, according to Manahl, is the role of Darfur exiles. Manahl suggested that perhaps some should be included.

¶ 18. (C) In closing, Moore and Manahl both said it was important to keep sight of two related issues -- the local disputes over pasture and land which need to be addressed, as well as the political demands of the regions within the overall constitutional review process. Manahl said that Darfur might set a bad precedent for other restive regions and could encourage violence in order to obtain concessions from the central government.

¶ 19. Minimized Considered.

FOSTER